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EDITORIAL COMMENT



MRS. LOUNSBERY'S summary of the work accomplished by Miss Maxwell at Sternberg makes us wish more than ever that Miss Maxwell could be induced to write a history of those awful weeks,—for awful they were until order and comfort had been brought out of chaos and suffering,—but, as is so often the case with those who have done a great work, the women who were actually in the midst of those terrible conditions from the first have been peculiarly reticent, and we shall never know one-half of what they endured or that they accomplished. Mrs. Lounsbury has expressed the hope that other nurses would give their experiences, and we think that as a matter of history this should be done.

No one questions to-day the fact that training-schools in our large hospitals have been the means of one of the greatest reform movements of the century, and the introduction of women nurses in the army in the years to come stands for an equally important event. The conditions under which our first nurses did such splendid work should be placed on record now, while the events are fresh in the minds of those who were on the field.

NEW YORK STATE MEETING

NOTICE is given in "Official Reports" of the New York State meeting, which is to be held in Rochester on October 21 at the assembly-room of the Nurses' Home of the City Hospital, on West Avenue. The idea of State registration was first given public voice in this city, when Miss Palmer, then superintendent of the City Hospital, and Miss Allerton, superintendent of the Homœopathic Hospital, read brief papers on the subject before the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs, and a resolution was passed by that body in support of the idea. The Rochester nurses are making preparation for a very interesting meeting, and it is hoped the attendance will be large. Nurses who are not yet members are free to attend and listen to the proceedings. The question of legislation will be discussed and some line of procedure decided upon. The official title that shall be adopted, whether "Trained Nurse," "Graduate Nurse," "Certified Nurse," or "Registered Nurse," must also be decided upon, and a very general expression of opinion is desired.

PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTION

EVERYTHING that concerns the preliminary department of the Johns Hopkins Training-School is of special interest to training-school workers at this time, and the paper published in this number by Mr. Dawson, the instructor in physiology and anatomy to the Johns Hopkins nurses, is of value just now when the question of more thorough preparation is agitating the nursing world.

Unquestionably such a preliminary department as Miss Nutting has been able to establish at the Johns Hopkins School is the ideal method. Her nurses during this period are directly under the discipline of the school and are a

part of it. But the expense of such a course as managed upon the Johns Hopkins lines is greater than the majority of hospitals can meet. The expense for the domestic science equipment alone is very great, and the outlay for so many paid instructors must be far beyond that which most of our hospitals could consider.

We understand that the result of this experiment far exceeds the fondest expectations of those who instituted it, justifying in this instance the financial outlay, and making what was undertaken as an experiment a permanent department of the school.

The question that the poorer hospitals are considering is, how to obtain the results which the Johns Hopkins School has demonstrated to be so valuable without so great an outlay of money. Because the financial problems must be considered we continue to advocate the utilization of institutions already in existence for this purpose; for instance, in our own city of Rochester there exists, as we have already mentioned, an institution known as the "Mechanics' Institute," whose domestic science department is very perfect in equipment, ranking fourth among such schools in the entire country, and to which several of the hospitals in the city have for many years sent their pupils for instruction in cooking. A special course was arranged to meet the requirements of the training-schools, and very satisfactory results have been obtained.

This year plans are being made for broadening the instruction to be given by the institute with a view to ultimately establishing there a preliminary department for nurses.

Miss Allerton, of the Homœopathic Hospital; Miss Keith, of the City Hospital; Mrs. Curtiss, of the Hahnemann Hospital, and Miss Palmer, late superintendent of the City Hospital, as a member at large, have formed themselves into a committee with the approval of the managers of the hospitals which they represent, have conferred with the officers of the institute, and are arranging for the teaching of anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and bacteriology, in addition to the domestic science classes, during the coming winter. It is proposed to give these pupils short service in the hospital, allowing ample time for the class and study work.

The Mechanics' Institute is very fortunately situated, being located in the centre of the city convenient to all car lines.

The interest in this new movement, both on the part of the hospital managers and the officers of the institute, would seem to place the success or failure of the undertaking entirely in the hands of the superintendents of the training-schools.

There is no question but that the initiatory detail of such a radical change of method is most difficult, because the daily routine of the ward administration must be greatly changed, and it seems wiser, at least to this group of women, to make such changes gradually, testing each step thoroughly before proceeding on broader lines.

THE lecture course given in this number by Miss McMillan, late superintendent of the Lakeside Hospital, Cleveland, Ill., was prepared, by request, to meet the needs of those schools which are as yet unable to consider the new method and must continue upon the old lines.

Miss McMillan is a graduate of the Illinois Training-School, and her experience in training-school work makes her suggestions valuable.

WHAT A NURSE SHOULD EAT

WE wish to give a word of very practical advice to the great army of young nurses just entering upon their first year of training in regard to the necessity of the woman who is preparing to be a nurse being able to eat every kind of food that may be placed before her in sufficient quantity to maintain her health and insure strength for the arduous duties which she may expect to perform so long as she remains in the work.

No young woman who starts out in life with a weak digestion should attempt to become a nurse, and those women who have been permitted, in their home life, to be finicky and fussy about their food, if they cannot adapt themselves to the plain, wholesome fare of the hospital without making themselves or others uncomfortable, should abandon nursing as a means of livelihood.

We contend that every hospital should provide good, plain, nourishing food for its working-people with the necessary amount of good meat, and fruit, cooked or in season, for the maintenance of good health. No institution expects to provide luxuries or costly food out of season as a part of its daily bill of fare, and no institution can cater to the individual whims of its employes; consequently it becomes necessary that the individual shall adapt herself to the institution in regard to the matter of food, as in everything else.

When a nurse begins to go about in private duty she has to take her food as it is placed before her; often there is no one in the family who can give any thought or care to her comfort in this regard, and what is good enough for the family is considered to be good enough for her, and the nurse who has been trained as a child or has trained herself later on to eat every kind of cereal, meat, and all vegetables, who can drink tea, coffee, or cocoa with equal comfort, and who is not dependent upon rich desserts, goes about the world with the greatest degree of comfort, and keeps her health and strength through long years of hard labor. The ability to eat everything is the best equipment for life's hard battle with which a mother can endow her child.

THE INFLUENCE THAT MAKES A SCHOOL

WE are always glad when the matron or superintendent of a small general hospital speaks up in its defence. All large hospitals do not train good nurses, neither do all small hospitals train poor nurses; the character of the woman in charge of the nursing department, her personal dignity, her sense of justice, her ability to govern and to teach, have more to do with the kind of nurses that she graduates than the number of beds in the institution.

The selection of such women for hospital positions unfortunately does not rest entirely with the nursing profession, although to a great extent the superintendents are called upon to endorse the applications of their graduates who are seeking hospital positions.

It requires a great deal of moral courage to tell the real truth when called upon for such endorsement, and it may give rise to embarrassing complications to refuse; still, this is a point upon which every training-school superintendent should stand firm, recommending only such of her nurses for this responsible position of leadership whom she feels absolutely sure may be trusted to fulfil the moral as well as the professional obligations of such a position. A woman may be ever so finely educated, may have had training in a school of the highest grade, may be skilled in every branch of nursing work, but may be a most

undesirable head for an institution because of her lack of dignity in her relations with men.

Nothing more serious on her part than a trifling manner and too great familiarity with the male members of the hospital household are needed to lower the moral tone of the entire establishment.

In the small hospital, where the woman occupies the double position of superintendent of the hospital and training-school, absolutely no license is possible. Every movement and every action is known, discussed, and criticised by every member of the household, all alike taking their cue, both for conduct and duty, from her example. To be dignified without severity, to be cordial without familiarity, to be just without harshness, and to be sympathetic without partiality, requires a general poise that few ever attain, the basis for which is in the character of the woman regardless of the size of the school in which she has been trained.

THE SUPERINTENDENTS' MEETING IN DETROIT

Miss Dock's account of this meeting, given so fully in "Official Reports," certainly gives the impression of a most interesting and charming occasion. The papers read, which are of a high order of excellence, will be given in later numbers of the JOURNAL. It is to be regretted that so few of the older members were present, but their absence gave all those new members the opportunity of a lifetime to talk, and undoubtedly they made the most of the occasion.

THE ANNUAL COUNCIL OF THE GUILD

WE wish to call the special attention of guild members to the official notice of the Annual Council, given on another page. The success of the council depends largely upon the prompt action of the secretaries of the branches. Philadelphia people are delightfully hospitable, the city is interesting historically, and, aside from the interest in the council meetings, one is sure to be repaid who makes the effort to attend.

